



via pacis

Newsletter of the Des Moines Catholic Worker Community



Bonnie Ackerman

Spreading an Epidemic of Goodness

An Epidemic of Goodness

Beth Preheim

Last week, a couch in our hospitality house got moved from one of the room to the other. The fight broke out within the hour we were open. The reason someone asleep on the couch pushed his legs out, which then hit the walkway leading into front room. Once again, a reminder to us that furniture placement affects behavior.

Most people are aware of the ways environment interacts with psychology: Pink make people more calm; walls make a room seem larger. One year the State of Michigan decided to plant flowers at some of its reststops. Visits at those sites decreased by 40 percent. I read that tidbit seven years ago and have since thought about it a lot — small changes, big results.

And like flowers at a reststop, Catholic Worker movement is to be a small force in the world that brings about a blossoming

ing of goodness.

Here at the Des Moines Catholic Worker we've combined findings from social research and active nonviolence in an effort to make our neighborhood and hospitality house safer, better places to be.

Peace in the House

In this issue of *via pacis* we've written about renovation projects and new ministries. With your support, we are able to better serve our guests and to create an even more comfortable and peaceful environment in the house.

We open our doors to people who are hungry and tired, who are sick and in pain, who are cold or maybe too hot, who are frustrated, lonely, angry. (And at times that could describe us as well.) It naturally follows that, periodically, tensions rise in the house. Here's what we've done recently to make our house a more pleasant place to be.

Environment: We improved the lighting and expanded the bathroom. We added air cleaners and better fans to improve the air quality. We try to keep up with cleaning throughout the day.

Hospitality: We try to greet each person who comes in the door and offer food and beverages. More food, less fights. We've rearranged our clothing and bread distribution to make it more accessible.

Presence: We schedule two or even three workers/volunteers to be present in the house so we have enough people to intervene with conflict resolution skills before fights break out. We also ask people to leave if their behavior is threatening.

The more successful we are at reaching these goals, the more peace we have within our house.

Peace in the Neighborhood

Early in the spring of the year, the corner of 7th and Indiana was noted by *The Des Moines Register* as a prime spot in Des Moines to purchase crack cocaine. It's also just out our front door. Of even greater concern, this intersection has been the site of frequent violent disturbances resulting in police intervention.

Some of the violence occurred for the same reasons listed above: people in pain. But much of the violence revolved around the concentration of illegal activity. If prostitution or drugs were legal, purveyors of prostitution and pot, crack, and crank could set up nice storefront offices. But that's not the case. So tensions arise over turf and money. Add addiction to the mix, and you've got volatility.

In response, we decided to use active nonviolence to decrease the number violent incidents in the area. Here's our story:

A Neighborhood in Crisis

Last fall, when I arrived at the Catholic Worker, the neighborhood was relatively peaceful on some days, but there were also times of fighting — both verbal and physical. In my first weeks here I saw a woman with her eye bashed in by a man who attacked her with a baseball bat because of a dispute over marijuana. I saw a man hurl bricks all around the neighborhood in a fit of anger after a fight with his lover.

At that time, we tried to keep people from selling drugs and sex from the front steps of our house. It wasn't easy.

Heading into the new year we were hearing criticism from neighbors and city officials that

perhaps we were part of the problem by offering daytime shelter and food to those engaged in the aforementioned behaviors.

We stand firm in our belief in the Gospel mandate to practice the Works of Mercy, to extend hospitality to every person. Just like churches who accept sinners and saints alike, we serve people and confront behavior.

2 We directly confronted dangerous behavior we observed. Those of us trained in techniques of nonviolence inserted ourselves in the middle of street fights.

3 We appealed directly to the people out on the street and asked their help in decreasing violence.

4 We increased our efforts at neighborhood beautification:



Melissa and Haley, along with other neighborhood children, ran a koolaid stand on the corner of 7th and Indiana — formerly a site of violent incidents in our neighborhood.

photo: Beth Preheim

growing a huge garden in an empty lot, planting flowers, and picking up trash around the neighborhood. In addition to improving the neighborhood environment, these activities also created an additional visible presence of neighbors, our community members and volunteers.

5 And as we had always been doing, we provided a haven. Those suffering from addiction have told us that they know that when they are ready to make changes, the Catholic Worker is a safe place to come to.

In our efforts, we were clear about a few matters. We were not trying to push the problem into someone else's backyard; we did not presume to end prostitution and drug dealing. The focus was clear: less violence.

It became evident that our gentleness, our willingness to welcome people into our home and feed them, created a context for communication about what we were doing on the streets.

Turning of the Tide

After two months, neighborhood children had reclaimed one corner of the block. So on one of the busiest times for dealing — Sunday afternoon — koolade instead of crack was being sold on the corner. A big victory!

Now, nearly a year later, the area around our house is perceptibly more peaceful although the

Continued on page 5

Fall Appeal

With leaves falling from trees and a crispness in the air, we can all feel the change that's coming.... And already our donations of food, clothing and other items are picking up. Each small item — it really is such a blessing. We are grateful for small and large gifts. The generosity of our supporters is impressive.

During the upcoming season of giving, our work of faith at the DMCW is to ask and then to receive. Somehow, even in the bleakest of times, the beloved community comes through for us. It enriches our lives to live in this way. For our guests, it can mean that their most basic needs are met.

There are so many ways people give to us: of their time, material possessions, and of their financial resources. So please remember us during the coming months.

As a community, this past year has been one of renewal. We're doing all kinds of things: read all about it in this newsletter. Our community life is rich, the work rewarding.

One big change for us is resident carpenter, Richard Farmer, who came for a couple

weeks and will probably end up staying half the year. Richard is an all around "fix-it" guy. He works full-time around the place. Here's just a partial list of the things he's done: replaced all the broken windows, insulated for winter, repaired the foundation at Lazarus House, replaced most of our doors so that they seal better, replaced the kitchen sink, built lots and lots of shelves, improved the lighting, made the electrical systems more safe in all the houses. We could go on... but you get the picture.

To finance all of this, many people have donated to our "building fund." We also received many supplies from Home Recycling Inc. Thanks so much.

We know all this work will make a difference in the lives of guests, volunteers and workers for years to come. We've gratefully endured the disruption and extra cleaning. And we'll keep at it, with your support, to continue to make our community hospitable and safe.

So all this is to say, once again, please remember us during your time of holiday giving. Peace and blessings to all of you.

Daniel Nichols

Why

are Iowans blowing up
mosques in Iraq?

by Michael Sprong

While people of conscience are focused — and rightly so — on the 150-plus Iraqi children who die each day due to the U.S. / U.N. imposed sanctions; few are aware of the now nine-month-old bombing campaign against the people of Iraq. Even fewer U.S. citizens are aware that Air National Guard units — those weekend warriors under the command of state governors — are used extensively in enforcing the illegally declared U.S. / British "no fly zones" in northern and southern Iraq.

Since late December of 1998, U.S. and United Kingdom warplanes enforcing the "no fly zones" over Iraq have been fired upon almost daily by Iraqi military anti-aircraft artillery. In response, these warplanes have bombed targets in the vicinity of the artillery. As a result of the bombings, nearly 150 civilians have been killed and more than 200 have been injured.

So it was with a profound sense of shame that we opened the July 30 issue of *The Des Moines Register* to see Governor

Tom Vilsack perched in the cockpit of an Iowa Air Guard F-16 warplane, praising the Guard's upcoming mission to enforce the "no fly zone" over northern Iraq. In the *Register* article we learned that the 132nd Fighter Wing of the Iowa Air Guard would be hosted at the Turkish Air Base at Incirlik and from there would patrol the "no fly zone." The Iowa Air Guard troops and warplanes operated from Incirlik from August 3 - September 7 of this year.

Because our community became aware of the illegal and immoral nature of the Air Guard's mission in Iraq, we decided that we were bound to interfere with that mission.

Consequently, on August 2, Brian Terrell, of Maloy Iowa; Ed Bloomer; and I entered the headquarters of the 132nd Fighter Wing at the Des Moines International Airport to deliver a "Caution and Appeal" to the commander and personnel of the 132nd Fighter Wing. The document was also addressed to Governor Vilsack. The three of us intended to block the Air Guard's

continued on page 7



Please join us for

Friday Evening Liturgy

7:30 p.m.

Dingman House, 1310 7th St.

Celebrate the Eucharist and spend time with friends

of note . . .

Congratulations:

to Loaves and Fishes, the Catholic Worker Community in Duluth, MN on their 10-year anniversary

to St. Francis House, the Catholic Worker in Chicago, IL, on their 25-year anniversary.

We saw friends, old and new, from both these communities at the Midwest Catholic Worker Gathering and were very impressed with their love and commitment. Keep up the good work!



Drawing by community member Jordan Dawson, "God and Mary"

Jacqueline Dickey
Catholic Worker

Social Activist, Poet

Jacqueline Dickey graced the Des Moines community with her presence and with two fine poetry readings. Jacqueline writes in a lyrical narrative free verse, moved her audiences to tears as she read poems about Iraq, family life, hospitality, and the pain of loss. She treated listeners to an evening of poetry at the Des Moines Valley Friends Meeting House, Oct. 5 and at the Catholic Worker, Oct. 9.

Jacqueline's poems have been published in a volume called *When the Believer's Chin Points Toward the Moon* published by Rose Hill Books. They sold like hotcakes at the poetry readings. To order a copy, contact The Catholic Worker Bookstore, 1-800-43-PEACE. Below is a sample from the book:

The Night Moses the Ethiopian Spoke from the Mountain

The cleaning lady
with a face as strong
as Bedouin coffee
turned over
the bucket of latrine water
mounted it
and said

Don't try to tell
me what truth is
For I know
sometimes the moon
can be a mountain
White mens want to climb it
But black folk
knows how to
sing to it



Calendar of Events

Oct. 21 — Des Moines

Rev. Michael Morwood, Australian author of *Tomorrow's Catholic: Understanding God & Jesus in a New Millennium* speaking at 7:00 p.m., Friends Meeting House, 4211 Grand Ave, Des Moines

Contact: Helen Oster (515) 223-5031

Oct. 29 - 31 — St. Paul, MN

Committing to Peace and Justice: History and Future of Nonviolent Dissent in America A conference uniting long-time, well-known activists with you. Presenters include: Daniel Berrigan, S.J.; Liz McAlister; and David Delling.

Radisson Hotel, St. Paul, MN

Contact: MIST (612) 698-9352

Oct. 29 - Nov. 3 —

Des Moines, Grinnell

Gods of Metal Plowshares Tour

See page 7 for more info

Nov. 12-14 — Fort Benning, GA

Close the School of the Americas

Vigil and nonviolent civil disobedience at the School of the Americas. Organizers expect 10,000 people at this event with 5,000 risking arrest.

Contact: SOA Watch (202) 234-3440

Local Des Moines Contact: Kathleen McQuillan,

AFSC, 515-274-4851

Nov. 13 — Des Moines

Iowans Against the Death Penalty Annual Mtg 12:30 p.m. Holy Trinity Catholic Church, Media Ctr. 2926 Beaver Ave, Des Moines

Dec. 5 — Des Moines

Salvadoran Martyrs' Commemoration

Time and place TBA
Contact: Catholic Peace Ministry, 515-255-8114

December 26-28 — Omaha, NE

Retreat, Witness and Line-Crossing at StratCom

Annual Feast of the Holy Innocents Action at Offutt AFB

See page 7 for more info

Dec. 29 - Jan. 2 —

Las Vegas, NE

Millennium 2000: Celebrate "Religious Action for Disarmament"

A New Year's action of prayer, education, and protest at the Nevada Test Site

Contact: NDE (702) 646-4814

Jan. 7-8 — Des Moines

Forum & Conference

Iowans for a Landmine Free World

Jan. 7 — 4:00 p.m. Embassy Suites
Presidential Candidate Forum to discuss U.S. policy on the Mine Ban Treaty

Jan. 8 — 11 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Univ. of Osteopathic Medicine
Conference on the effect of landmines upon the global community

Note: Iowans for a Landmine Free World is looking for temporary staff, part-time or full-time.

Bishop Dingman House

1310 7th St.

(515) 243-0765

Community members:

Frank Cordero

Richard Flamer

Jerry McDermott

Mike Thompson

Msgr. Ligutti House

1301 8th St.

(515) 246-9887

Community members:

Beth Preheim

Norman Searah

Michael Sprong

Lazarus House

1317 8th St.

(515) 246-1499

Community Members:

The Dawson-Ngamo family: Carla,

Richard, Julius, Joshua and Jordan

Ed Bloomer

Irving Schroeder

via pacis

Newsletter of the Des Moines Catholic Worker Community
PO Box 4551
Des Moines IA 50306

Community

NEWS

by Carla Dawson-Ngamo
Hello!

I hope this article finds everyone enjoying the beautiful Fall weather. We have been tremendously busy what with all the repairs, outside and inside. We have been swamped. We have also had a couple days off for much needed rest.

To start off, the community had a benefit concert at Greenwood Park on Saturday, Sept. 11. We held the concert to raise money for all the repairs we have planned.

It was a blast!!! We'd like to thank the bands that donated their time and talent: Frankie P.F., The Autumn Project, Rising Sun, The Groove Hunters, and The Norman Staggers Band. It was a fantastic time. The weather was perfect, the people were blissful, and the music was jamming. We hope to make this a yearly event.

We have a very resourceful man staying with us. His name is Richard Flamer. He's been with us about two months now, and he's been working fast and furious on renovating all three of our houses!

For example, Frank, Ed, Michael Sprong, Irving, and Richard Flamer tore out the radiators from Lazarus House and removed the asbestos which was a very dirty and dangerous job. Richard Flamer has also been doing jobs for other people in Des Moines. If you need something done, give us a call and Richard will get back to you ASAP.

Richard F. would tell you that none of the work would be done if it wasn't for his most trusted help, Ed. Ed has been nearly indispensable, running back and forth getting supplies, etc. (See articles on pages 4 and 5.)

Richard and Ed also helped with the duct work for the new furnace at Lazarus House. All the material and labor were donated by three gentlemen from St. Pius parish — who wish to remain anonymous.

We received a lovely commercial refrigerator from Sacred Heart parish. That is truly a blessing what with all the wear and tear on a regular refrigerator, we were killing them off in an average of two years.

We have some departures from our community. AnnaMarie has moved to Iowa City. She plans to return to school. She is a very wonderful, young lady. She has a way of bringing out the best in folks. We will miss her immensely and hope her future brings her great joy.

Our faithful deviled-egg-maker, Jean Yugur, (alias Mean Jean) has moved back to California. Jean now has her Ph.D. in Child Psychology, and we are very proud. It was a tough road, but Jean never quit. We will all miss her and pray for her future happiness.

Now on to more happy topics: Richard Ngamo is a nurse now. Richard passed the board. He is working through Nurse Finders, a temp agency. We are

all very proud and know the future looks bright for him.

Meredith has been accepted into the carpentry program through HOME Inc. It is a wonderful program. We look forward to her doing odd jobs around the house. Meredith also went to New York and then to Boston for a wedding.

Jordan was able to spend a weekend with Meredith and Eric while I was at a wedding in Davenport. Joshua spent the weekend with Wendy, Katie and Antonio. They both were on their best behavior.

Julius is now in 10th grade and doing well. He is no longer working at HyVee, what with school and football. He had a very exciting summer going to Mississippi and St. Louis. He wasn't able to make it to New York. He's hoping to go to the Bruns basketball camp next year.

Michael Thompson went on a little vacation to St. Louis, a trip he won't soon forget. We are all glad he made it back safe and sound.

Norman has been very busy

getting ready for his trip. To find out more, read "Norman's Whereabouts."

Beth and Michael have been very busy. The band Beth is in has had a few performances. Beth also plays music at Gatchel United Methodist Church. Beth has been doing an average of 4-6 haircuts a week which by no means is an easy task. She also sorts and distributes numerous clothing items each week. Beth and Michael have been very busy with the free food giveaway we have every Saturday at Trinity United Methodist Church. If you would like to help, please call to get more information.

Michael Sprong has been on two speaking engagements. He has spoken at churches to get the word out about what we do and what are needs are. If you'd like one of the community members to speak at your church or organization, feel free to call us.

Frank has been very busy working on the Hunger Hike. He is in charge of it. He has also been spending a great deal of time with his cousin who is very ill.

This week, he is in Indiana at Notre Dame speaking about radical Catholicism.

As for me, I've started classes at Grandview College here in Des Moines — working toward a degree in Special Education. This along with my job at Moulton School Headstart, work here at the DMCW, and being a full-time Mom keeps life interesting.

The majority of our community went to the Midwest Catholic Worker Gathering at Sugar Creek, Iowa. From what I hear, it was a fun and rewarding time. The gathering is a time to get together with other Worker communities, to talk and reminisce about the past and plans for the future. We would like to thank the Winona Catholic Worker for being this year's host.

I hope this will help keep you up to what is going on at the Worker. As always, our work would not be possible without all the support and prayers we receive from each and everyone of you. So keep it up. Much thanks, God Bless.



photo: Richard Flamer

Norman's Whereabouts

Hi, I've been busy doing a lot of things which I'll share with you.

Midwest CW Gathering

make a video. I thought it was interesting and at the same time good to see something positive that kids were interested in.

Saturday night once again featured the annual talent and skit show with the famous "Football Mary" award. We also had a chance to give Chuck Trapkus of the Rock Island, IL CW an early birthday surprise with not one, but two cakes. With help from the children and a crew using a pickup truck, we had enough wood for a great fire and gathered around for some good music and conversation late into the evening. I had fun watching Tina Sipula passing around marshmallows to all the kids.

It was good to see everyone who came. It was interesting to see new people and hear about what Catholic Worker communities are doing. I enjoyed listening to people and at the same time checking in to see if people were happy. I also found myself praying a lot for Lee and remembering a lot of elderly Catholic Workers and friends who had passed away or were unable to come to the gathering because of illness.

At the end of the weekend

we still had a lot of food left so we had the "Annual Great Food Giveaway," which was still going on as Ed and I left for Des Moines with Sugar Creek well cleaned, mopped, and almost bug sprayed.

Maybe, before next year's gathering I'll deliver some bowls, nice deep soup, cereal, ice cream bowls to the retreat center at Sugar Creek....

Trip to South Dakota



Right now I'm trying to raise money for school supplies, weatherizing material for windows and doors, along with tools. Most of the school supplies will go to a school that I support called Red Cloud School, in Pine Ridge, SD. In late October I'll be spending time there. I'll also be spending some time in Rosebud with my friend, Howard, who is a Native American Indian. I'm hoping to drop off winter material to KILI, a Native American Indian radio station which I support and believe in because they help their people have a voice.

We live in a land of plenty; we are a rich nation as we are told. We are a loving country, yet there is a lot of hate and greed. For centuries and still today the land which once belonged to the Native American Indians is always taken away. They are always lied to and treated badly. I would like to show the Native American Indians of South Dakota that not every white man or woman is a greedy, racist — that instead someone cares. I would like to help put an end to hate.

I'm asking for your help. Howard and I are planning on leaving on the 23rd of October. If things go well, I will take supplies and do some community service work in South Dakota. So far I have two typewriters which need paper, one TV, a few woodcarving books, tools, notebook filler paper, and a few single subject notebooks. Right now Howard's looking for a good vehicle to take. My Geo would never survive the drive on reservation roads.

We'll need some blankets and winter coats depending on the space we have in the vehicle. But for now all I'm asking for is money to buy the following:

school supplies, winter supplies, staple gun, hammers, typewriter stuff. If you've got something that you think you don't need, like a typewriter or calculator if it is in good condition so a student can use it, let me know. I'll even take empty beverage cans folks.

Other things ...

I'm still woodcarving. I'm working on a couple of projects. One of them is for a lady who loves cowboy boots. Another is for Ed Bloomer, and still another is for a guy named Tim.

I'm still working as a dishwasher, yet most of my money goes to pay for doctors because my HMO doesn't want to pay.

I'm planning a trip back home sometime next year. It's been nearly five years since I've seen my Mom. I've had a lot of mothers and a few grandmothers tell me that I need to spend some time with my mother. So I'll do that sometime soon.

Well, I've got to go. As always, I thank you for your time.

— Norman Searah

And p.s. Thanks AnnaMarie for the typewriter.



20 Ways to Say "Des Moines Catholic Worker"

The Des Moines Catholic Worker touches the lives of many people in the community. People often ask us, "What exactly is it that you do?" Here it is — the top 20.

1 Meals

We serve supper five days a week. During the day we also serve snacks and leftovers. Community and church groups bring in some meals and help serve. We can also use leftovers from your big event: picnics, weddings, parties. (Sorry, it's tough for us to do pickups; please bring it to us.) Other needs: coffee, tea, sugar, paper towels, large trash bags.

2 Produce Giveaway

Each Saturday morning at 10 a.m. we hand out donated fruits and vegetables to up to 50 families. Trinity United Methodist Church lets us use their basement for this. We're always looking for volunteers — it only takes an hour.

3 Food Pantry

We give out food baskets or personal items to at least 200 people each month. Needs: in addition to food, we hand out toiletry items; small sizes (hotel size) are useful. We always have a demand for deodorant, razors, and diapers.

4 Community Garden

We have a community garden tended by us and neighbors. We can use donated seeds, plants and extra garden produce.

5 Clothing

Our front hall doubles as a free clothing room. We sort through clothing donations and put out practical, in-season clothing. We also have a sock exchange: guests give us their dirty socks to wash; we give them a clean pair. Needs: laundry detergent! new or used items: socks (to replace the ones with holes), T-shirts, hats, gloves, mittens, men's pants.

6 Bedding

Each year we give out lots of blankets — several hundred — along with sheets and towels, so we need donations, second-hand is okay.

7 Long-term Hospitality

We have provided a few people who were homeless with a permanent place to live, and they have found a place in our community life.

8 Children's Program

Each week Margaret Cavanaugh comes for an hour to spend time with neighborhood children. They play games together and have a snack.

9 Lawyer

Once a week a lawyer comes to our house to assist people with legal matters. Fred Gay has been the regular volunteer with others filling in when he can't make it.

10 Public Health / Outreach

We have a room which is used for providing services. Beth, who is a registered nurse, sees guests who need help with healthcare. She functions like an "ask-a-nurse" with screenings, referrals, patient education and basic first aid. Outreach workers from community programs like Healthy Start also can use this room. Needs: latex gloves, over-the-counter meds (especially cold meds and antibiotic ointments), medicine cups, a manual sphygmomanometer.

11 Haircuts

Since January, Beth has given haircuts once a week. And now some new volunteers will be helping out. Needs: combs, brushes to hand out. Our clippers broke; if you have a spare one, we could use it.

12 Peace & Justice Library

In our library at Ligutti House we have books on peace, justice and the Catholic Worker plus a wide range of other topics.

13 Newsletter

Ha! Caught you reading the *via pacis*. We publish four times a year and distribute about 3,500 copies of each issue.

14 Book Publishing

Ligutti House is also the home of Fortkamp Publishing / Rose Hill Books which Beth and Michael keep afloat. They, along with The Peter Maurin Center in Washington, DC, make available books on peace and justice and the Catholic Worker. Call 1-800-43-PEACE to request a catalog.

15 Liturgy

Each Friday at 7:30 p.m. we have liturgy. Priests from the Des Moines Diocese volunteer their time to say Mass. This is a time of real community building among supporters, guests, and workers. All are welcome.

16 Community Programs

Several times a year we sponsor programs and have "round-table" discussions.

17 Community Outreach

Because we do not get paid for our work at the DMW, most of us have part-time jobs. We also do some volunteer work. Here are some of the groups that benefit in the last year from our labor: Home Recycling, DMW Food Pantry, Shalom Zone after-school program, Gethsemani United Methodist Church, Headstart, Criminal Justice Ministries and Hansen House of Hospitality, the Hunger Hike, and the tutoring program at the library.

18 Activism

On a regular basis our community members are involved in social justice issues of the day. We are a community committed to nonviolent resistance. We aid and abet others around the country to do the same. Let us know if you want to be called when actions occur!

19 Public Speaking

Each month we speak to several groups on a variety of topics: the Catholic Worker movement and other topics in which we're active. We can give a talk and tour of our community, or we can come to you.

20 Volunteer Projects

Several groups, including youth, do volunteer projects at our house. Our mission is to do the Works of Mercy and to help others find ways to also serve.

More Info

Call us: (515) 243-0765



Adjusting to Life at the Worker

by Richard Flamer

Life in community is both exhilarating and exhausting. I have now been in Des Moines for about 6 weeks with a lot accomplished but much to be done.

Some time ago I sent Frank Cordaro a letter commenting on my miserable existence. His response: "Come to the Worker for a time of healing, I will be your spiritual advisor — and bring your tools." So come, I did.

As a contractor in California I was, daily, faced with the exigencies of making a living — of doing as good a job as I knew how in the shortest amount of time — of paying the least amount of money to my workers while retaining the best I could

find. The usual problems of business in America. At the Catholic Worker life is different.

When working with Ed and his moments of short-term memory loss, I sometimes get frustrated. But what he has given to me these last few weeks, has filled me with awe. He lives a holy life. Always in touch with the poor around him, he stops in mid-job to feed a fellow human or his cat. Articulate, intelligent and full of the holy spirit he uses humor to mask the frailties around him.

Some days we don't get started until 9:30 or 10:00 since the cat needs to get fed and Ed needs to get his "grubstake." There are the trips to the V.A.

and the post office to get his letters out to prisoners (mostly on death row.) Some days we start early and have to quit early for some random task.

The drywall isn't perfect. The doors on an 100-year old house can't be hung plumb since the jambs are not plumb. But now they are tight and the Worker buildings will be ready for winter.

Taking the asbestos off the old radiator system took us three days instead of one. But no one got hurt, the stuff was removed safely, properly disposed of and Father Frank got to beat a cast iron furnace apart with a sledge hammer.

Beth learned how to make

shelves out of old doors for the clothing room in the basement. AnnaMarie learned to patch drywall. Ed learned to mix concrete. I hope we're all learning together.

Sometimes I think I am in training for Central America.

My hope is to start a building program in Northern Guatemala with Bishop Flores of the Verapaz. I want to teach modern building techniques to the repatriated refugees who now have land but no structures.

Until my funds are raised it looks like I have much to learn from Ed, Father Frank, Beth, Mike, Norman and the rest of the Catholic Workers in Des Moines.

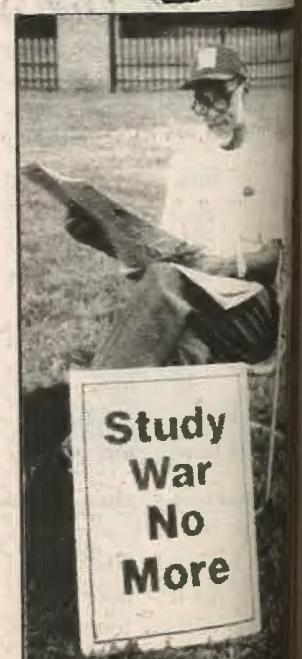


photo: Tammy
Richard Flamer held vigil with others Aug. 6-9 at StratCom/Offutt AFB.

Faith

by Ed Blodgett
You think that in the world I also pull the toughest —

At ti

Now come back carpenter's around has and a fresh Latin Ameri

The vates a clos am grateful going and ing that wi to work fo

Epidemic of Goodness

from page 1
ems in our neighborhood
And the problems will
as long as the neighbor
remains neglected. We can
olve all the problems or
drug dealing and pros
So we recognize our
successes and measure
the following changes:

The number of people (cus
driving by our house has
es especially during peak
for picking up prostitutes:
hour during the week.
The number of verbal argu
has decreased.
We have not witnessed an in
of violence in several
We are not being threatened
assassinated.

All this through the power
of nonviolence. Our
in the neighborhood really
creating an environment
as Peter Maurin puts it, it
er to be good.

Foundational Ideas

Our ideas about how to pro
out in the streets came from
Gospels first, from Catholic
tradition, from our expe
with nonviolence and hos
pitality. Our ideas also developed
some other provocative re
studies.

For example, psychological
research shows that small acts of
kindness or a little littering can
lead to an avalanche of other
small acts. In one study, re
searchers left a parked car in a
neighborhood. A week later, it sat
untouched. But when they left the
car open and removed the li
ttering, the car was stripped

in a day. And when they left a car
with a smashed window, in a
matter of hours the car was de
stroyed.

While still in nursing school,
I came across a research study
about fostering healthy changes.
The researchers studied
techniques for developing
healthy behavior in people
who had a heart attack. Sur
prisingly, extensive information
about the disease process,
treatment, self-care, and
consequences did little
to impact healthy behaviors.
Even warnings about pos
sible death did not create
changes. What was significant
was this: assisting
people in finding ways to
take small steps to make changes
in their daily lives.

Another study in the same
area showed that brief, but
consistent, follow-up (like a five
minute check-in call from a
nurse) over several months sig
nificantly increased the chance of
a healthy outcome.

Personal relationships and
follow-up really pay off. I believe
that each person, even the toughest
case, has the capacity to trans
form over time. I also have
learned that I can't predict who
will make the moves toward more
healthy behavior. Everyone is
worth investing in.

This matches the Gospel
message that each of us, no mat
ter how despicable, can in fact be
redeemed. We must treat them
as if it is so.

A Tipping Point

Some studies show that
social problems, such as crime,
function a whole lot like infec
tious diseases. Researchers are

finding that diseases and social
problems both follow a variety of
patterns: some blow up into epi
demics, some remain at a steady
state, endemic to the population.
During epidemics, both infectious



The New Yorker, June 3, 1996.
This article explains much of this
current research.)

Nonviolence Versus Violence

Public health officials
and Catholic Workers are
not the only ones using this
research. Police departments
across the country have been
implementing techniques to
cut down on small crimes in
order to prevent a tipping
point to a larger crime wave.
In fact, the New York City
Police Department has ap
plied these same concepts
and achieved a 50 percent
drop in felonies in the last
decade.

Here is Des Moines, crime in
our area, the "inner city," has
dropped 26% in three years. Our
area was targeted for federal anti
crime programs, including the
"Weed and Seed" program from
the Justice Department which op
erates on the premise of "weeding
out the criminal element so
economic development and social
programs can be seeded in dis
tressed neighborhoods." (DM
Register, Oct. 7, 1999)

However, the nationwide
drop in the crime rate has come
at a terrible price. Our jails con
tinue to be filled at an alarming
rate. Americans ignore the suc
cessful results of alternatives such
as victim offender reconciliation
programs. Police intimidation,
harassment, and brutality are
widely reported. Advocates for
the homeless report that police
harassment of people on the
streets has increased. The busi
ness of profiling criminals has re
sulted in a disproportionate num
ber of poor and minority people
being stopped by the police. This
is kindling for a firestorm born
of racism and classism.

Here in Des Moines one of
our community members was
stopped, questioned and frisked
by the police simply because he
walked by a known crack house
on his way home from work.

Our approach to turning the
tide away from dangerous, violent
behavior on the streets is not to
"backlash" against our friends
who are selling drugs and engag
ing in prostitution. Instead, we
aim to create a tipping point of
public, inclusive, life-affirming,
and "wholesome" activities in our
neighborhood.

Violence Abroad, Violence at Home

Just as we take personal re
sponsibility in our neighborhood,
we must engage the larger world.
That's why we at the DMCW also
aim to tip the balance in favor of
justice on a national and interna
tional scale.

Several times this past year
the DMCW has made the connec
tion between governmental use of
violence and its impact on youth.
We contend that when our gov
ernment leaders spend their days
explaining why they are bombing

the hell out of people halfway
around the world, the hypocrisy
does not escape young people.

At the same time that
Clinton was championing the
daily bombing of Kosovo, he
made this appeal following the
Littleton, Colorado massacre:
"We do know we must do more
to reach out to our children and
teach them to express their anger
and to resolve their conflicts with
words, not weapons." A small
paragraph cannot belie the fact
that he has been this year's big
gest promoter of violence.

And we've been in dialog
with the Iowa Governor Tom
Vilsack and challenged him on
his own boosterism of the bomb
ings in Iraq. (See story on page
2.)

Speaking up on the issues is
integral to the work of the
DMCW. We will always err on
the side of speaking out, rather
than remaining silent. We have
many supporters who appreciate
our message of hospitality, but
disagree with our activism.

Indeed, we grapple with
ways to be effective. And we may
not always be right. But if we wait
for the sure thing, we would do
nothing. Some friends of mine
working on racism hit the nail on
the head, "[The] 'right' method
evades us by the very nature of
our complex political and social
structure. Thus a disproportio
nate concern for the *morality of
method* results in the *greater im
morality of inaction*."

So we speak up even at per
sonal risk; we speak the truth as
we see it, in our home, on our
block, in our neighborhood, city,
nation, world. The very essence
of a Catholic Worker is one of
speaking truth regardless of the
consequences.

"A Spectacle Unto the World"

As Catholic Workers, we are
used to paradoxes: We discover
freedom in service, beauty in the
broken, greatness arising from
small acts of kindness. By
society's formula for success, the
DMCW shouldn't even exist: We
have no guaranteed source of an
nual income, no board of direc
tors, no paid staff, no manual of
policies. We may not make sense
"on paper," but we definitely have
something going on here that
makes us ordinary people doing
extraordinary work.

It is our hope that as we go
about our small daily acts of ar
ranging furniture, picking
up trash, planting flowers —
that we are role
models for nonviolence,
that we are the
"hundredth
monkey" of
peace, that we
tip the world
into an epi
demic of good
ness.



Faith And The Works of Mercy

Ed Bloomer

You have to know when to fold and when to hold! I
think that hospitality is a blessing and also the hardest thing
in the world to perform. I worked in a factory for 12 1/2 years.
I also pulled a two-year stint in the army. But hospitality is
the toughest job yet. I've had quite an education doing hosp
itality — still learning it seems.

At times I felt like I'd lost faith and had to quit hosp
itality. But my best friends have invited me back again to build
community, to start where I left off!

Now, after the six weeks away in the early spring, I have
come back refreshed. This time I have come through as a
carpenter's helper (gopher). Having Rich — my "boss" —
around has given me the opportunity to do a variety of work
and a fresh perspective on community. He served 12 years in
Latin America as a lay man for the people.

The work we do helps hold our houses together and cre
ates a closer bond with guests and those who live with us. I
am grateful to have the work and community that keeps me
going and restores my faith and gives me satisfaction in know
ing that wider community as a whole has brought us together
to work for the Kingdom!



Resistance Notes

Gods of Metal Plowshares Activists to visit Iowa

Oct. 29 - Nov. 3, 1999

The five Gods of Metal Plowshares activists will be in Central Iowa to give programs as a follow-up to their May 1997 plowshares action at Andrews Air Force Base where they hammered and poured blood on a B-52 bomber. Prison sentences for this action ranged from four to ten months.

Gods of Metal Plowshares: Sr. Ardeth Platte, OP and Sr. Carol Gilbert, OP are both Dominican sisters living in community at Jonah House in Baltimore. Kathy Shields Boylan returned to the Dorothy Day Catholic Worker in Washington, DC. Fr. Frank Cordaro is on a one-year leave of absence from priestly ministry and currently living at the Des Moines Catholic Worker. Fr. Larry Morlan now serves as pastor of St. Joseph's Parish in Rock Island, IL

Sunday, Oct. 31 — 6:30 p.m.

St. Anthony's Catholic School Cafeteria
16 Columbus Ave
Potluck dinner and talk.
Sponsored by WILPF and Catholic Peace Ministry

Monday, Nov. 1 — 7:00 p.m.

South Lounge of College Forum, Grinnell College
Contact: Ann Walsh, (515) 236-8080.

Tuesday, Nov. 2 — 7:00 p.m.

Bulldog Theatre / Olmstead Center, Drake University
Contact: Dean Wright, Home: (515) 225-3314
Work: (515) 271-3618

For more information, contact Frank Cordaro at the Catholic Worker: (515) 243-0765.



The 21st Annual Feast of the Holy Innocents Retreat, Witness and Line-Crossing at StratCom Headquarters — Dec. 26-29, 1999

Retreat at UNO Religious Center
Action at Offutt Air Force Base, home of Strategic Command (StratCom) Headquarters, the U.S. center for targeting of nuclear weapons.

Come and celebrate the full and often ignored meaning of the Christmas story. Come and expose, confront and convert StratCom.

Contact: Frank Cordaro at the Des Moines Catholic Worker (515) 243-0765.

Sponsored by the Des Moines Catholic Worker Community

Support Prisoners of Conscience

Those listed below are imprisoned for acts of nuclear and war resistance for more information, contact the Nuclear Resister, P O Box 43383, Tucson, AZ 85733 — nukeresister@igc.org

Minuteman III Plowshares

Daniel Sicken #28360-013
(41 months)
FPC Lewisburg, PO Box 2000, Lewisburg, PA 17837

Oliver Sachio Coe #28361-013
(30 months)
FPC Allenwood, PO Box 1000, Montgomery, PA 17752-9718

Bread Not Bombs Ploughshares

Stellan Vinthagen # BT8233
Ann-Britt Sternfeldt # BT8941
Annika Spalde # BT8940
c/o Ciaron O'Reilly
18 Whitland Rd
Liverpool L6 8NR
ENGLAND

Nuclear Whistle-Blowers

Grigory Pasko (awaiting trial)
no address available, Russia
(Military journalist & nuclear whistle blower under arrest for espionage - in custody since 11/97)

Mordechai Vanunu (18 years)
Ashkelon Prison, Ashkelon, Israel

Native American political prisoner

Leonard Peltier #89637-132 (life)
P O Box 1000, Leavenworth, KS 66048

School of Americas Resisters

John Patrick Liteky #83275-020
(two years)
FPC Sheridan Unit E-4, POB 6000, Sheridan, OR 97378-6000

Kathleen Rumpf #02117-052
(12 months)
FMC Carswell, POB 27066
Ft Worth TX 76127-0137

Fr Bill Bichsel SJ #86275-020
(18 months)

FPC Sheridan Unit 5, PO Box 6000, Sheridan, OR 97378-6000

Sr Marge Eierman OSF #88106-020
(14 months)

FPC Lexington, 3301 Leestown Rd., Lexington KY 40511

Ed Kinane # 86279-020
(16 months)

FPC Allenwood, POB 1000, Montgomery, PA 17752

Mary Trotochaud #88106-020
(14 months)

FPC Alderson, Box A, Alderson Women's Prison

Alderson, WV 24910

*The future will be
different if we make
the present different.*
— Peter Maurin

PEOPLES VOTE AGAINST PENTAGON WASTE

THE NEGLECTED STATE OF IOWA

TENDER THIS NOTE AS
YOUR VOTE FOR
SCHOOLS, FAMILY FARMS
& HEALTHY KIDS



OHNO2MUCH\$
Every Child
Treasure of the United States



THREE DOLLARS

Funny Money — A Wake Up Call for Politicos

Ed Bloomer and Michael Sprong brought a reality check to the craziness of the Republican Straw Poll in Ames, IA on August 14. Ed and Michael dumped thousands of "dollars" (pictured above) into the trash from the building by security, but were not arrested. Meanwhile, others outside handed out posters which called for a reduction in military spending and an increase in funds for human needs.

Action Updates

Arrests at Iowa Air Guard

Three people were arrested on August 2nd. Brian Terrell Maloy, IA; and Ed Bloomer and Michael Sprong of Des Moines, IA, entered the base to deliver a "Caution and Appeal" to the base commander in order to inform personnel the illegal and immoral nature of the Air Guard's mission in Iraq. Charges were dropped. See story on page 2.

Activists Hold Vigil at StratCom

DMCWers Ed Bloomer, Frank Cordaro and Richard Fleischman were among folks holding a three-day vigil at the Strategic Command Headquarters / Offutt Air Force Base Aug. 1-3, 1999. The vigil was designed to remember the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and to call for an end of the use of nuclear weapons. During the vigil, Robert Cook of Des Moines, IA crossed the line, was detained, and given a one-and-bar letter.

Tromp Trident Trek 1999

DMCW community members, Beth Preheim and Michael Sprong were among more than 30 walkers from eight states who participated in the third annual "Tromp Trident Trek" organized by Nukewatch. The trek — a four-day, 53-mile walk — culminated in a rally on August 8. About 65 people gathered at the U.S. Navy's "Project ELF" submarine transmitter site. The Extremely Low Frequency, ELF, messages generated at the site allow messages to be sent to British and U.S. Trident and Fast-Attack submarines. Twelve people arrested for trespass.

Trident Ploughshares 2000

This ongoing ploughshares-campaign uses nonviolent actions to prevent the greater harm of war crimes. Activists have been fined and jailed for blockades, damage to equipment, and other actions designed to dismantle and disarm the British Trident system. Over a hundred arrests were made in August. The next actions are schedule for Nov. 13-14.

Not Guilty!!

Nine people were found not guilty after being arrested for blocking the road to Bangor Trident submarine base in Poulsbo, WA. Although charged with disorderly conduct, the jury found the defendants not guilty after the judge instructed the jury to consider international treaties signed by the United States. Several jurors as well as the judge commented that they are opposed to the use of nuclear weapons.

Worth Reading

Nukewatch's publication, *Pathfinder*, which has a wealth of information on issues of nuclear power and weapons in the United States. Well worth reading: Nukewatch, PO Box 100, Luck WI 54853, (715) 472-4185, <nukewatch@winbright.com>

Why Are Iowans Blowing Up Mosques in Iraq?

from page 2

to the Middle East. After the base, we were by base security and to Des Moines City later, we were released being charged. We were given our "Caution and Appeal" to the base commander present at our arrest. On the day, Iowa Air Guard and warplanes departed Turkey.

"Caution and Appeal" the following information

used that Operation Watch, an ongoing action against Iraq — jointly by the United States, United Kingdom, and Turkey — is illegal and Governor Vilsack, under the command of the Guard, and citizens of Iowa are hereby cast in complicity in or connive Air Guard participation in Operation Northern Iraq in violation of international and universal standards of moral conduct. Consequently, we issue this urgent appeal to Iowa Air Guard personnel to refuse participation in Operation Northern

After the Air Guard's decision to turn to the issue of the Governor's involvement in the Air Guard's mis-

sion over Iraq. Governor Vilsack never responded to our "Caution and Appeal." However, he did reiterate his unconditional support for the mission and the Clinton Administration's policy toward Iraq in an interview during which he was asked about our action at Iowa Air Guard Headquarters.

Finally, the inevitable happened: The August 16 edition of the *Des Moines Register* reported that Iowa Air Guard warplanes had bombed a city in northern Iraq. In the attack, our fellow Iowans blew up a mosque and injured three civilians.

Two days later the DMCW, along with members of Des Moines Islamic Center, Womens International League for Peace and Freedom, American Friends Service Committee, and other groups gathered in the State Capitol rotunda to offer prayers of repentance and to publicly apologize for the actions of the Iowa Air Guard.

Following the prayer service, we delivered a letter to Governor Vilsack in which we appealed to him to:

"Issue an apology to the people of Iraq and to adherents of the Islamic faith for the destruction

of the mosque in Iraq. Apologize to the people of Iraq for injury to innocent civilians. Demand the immediate return of all Iowa Air Guard personnel and warplanes to Des Moines. Refuse to authorize further use of the Iowa

fly zones" — because there is none.

Our next course of action was clear: We needed to educate the governor about the fact that there is no international support for the "no-fly zones" and that

his own pro-war politicking in this regard is unbecoming the office of Iowa's First Citizen.

Once more, we gathered at the Capitol and prayed for an end to the devastating sanctions and bombings against the people of Iraq. We delivered another letter to the Governor. This time, in addition to the moral and legal arguments against the Air Guard's mission, we called the Governor to task on the symbolic implications of his behavior:

"... [I]n a time when we preach that young people need to find ways to resolve conflict without violence, it is nothing less than hypocritical to offer unconditional support to a military mission that has only the goal of using violence, grossly unjustified in this case, to resolve a conflict. When Iowa's children see our 'First Citizen' joy-riding around the state in a machine designed only to kill and destroy, what signal does that send?"

Within hours, the Governor responded with a letter in which he no longer defended the mission of the Air Guard, but instead emphasized how he was "taken aback" by our observation that he was "joy-riding" around the state in a warplane.

On September 7, the Iowa Air Guard and their warplanes returned to Des Moines to muted fanfare and tight security. One F-16 pilot involved in the brutalization of innocent civilians was quoted in *The Des Moines Register*. "You hate to drop bombs on anyone.... But I was on a mission doing what I was assigned to do."

In the end, we primarily feel shame at our own lack of sacrifice in the face of this violence against the people of Iraq. There is much more we could have done to prevent Iowans from bombing mosques and harming innocents in Iraq, but we didn't. The only solace is that we did make an issue out of the Air Guard's mission and confronted our Governor, a good man, who should know better about his behavior which represents the people of this great state.

Maybe next time we will find the strength and faith to do more to prevent a similar crime against God's children.



Air Guard to enforce the illegal and immoral no fly zones over Iraq."

Some days later, I received a letter from the Governor. He defended the Air Guard's mission as authorized by UN resolutions, but could not cite which resolution authorized the creation and enforcement of the "no

the catalpa tree

It seems as if this page has shrunk or something? Oh yeah, it has because this is the last Catalpa Tree. AnnaMarie has moved to the Iowa City and I'm afraid it was a group effort. But if anyone is grief about its conclusion, please feed our egos and write us a letter to hear your feedback. Keep the peace.

Adding Life in the Jesuit Volunteer Corps

by Meredith

I sit in Penn Station, thinking. "Great, I missed the Long Island by 3 minutes. I thought I planned so well 30 minutes ahead of time." I'm at my sister's apartment.

Thankfully my thoughts had drifted to the class of 2000 commencement I had just read (mind you, I had never given birth to a person threatened to walk to the fact that the speech was pro-choice — but it was a topic for another conversation). The heart of the speech ended up in the words of my sister when she asked

him why he lived on the beach and did not seek shelter: "look at the view." I instantly began to reflect upon the characteristics that make people who they are and the world such a soulful mystery; like the tremendous diversity and chaos surrounding me in all of the people in Penn Station that night; the way my mother's nostrils flare when she's going to cry; the peace it brings to look across the fields in Iowa and see for miles; watching a kid pick their nose when they think nobody's looking; the way my boyfriend winks at me across the room.

And I remember the time when I really began to open my

senses. I was in my senior year of college. While many of my peers were interviewing for jobs or studying to get into grad school I felt pulled in another direction. I wanted to travel to a new place, to do something that would challenge and change me.

That's when I learned about the Jesuit Volunteer Corps (JVC). I heard of the year long program focused on community, spirituality, simple living and social justice. I applied to the program and much to my surprise I wound up moving to Des Moines six months later. That was three years ago and I'm still here in Des Moines.

My lifestyle dramatically changed that year. I lived with three volunteers from very different economic and social backgrounds; we pooled our modest paychecks to pay the bills and got \$75 each in spending money per month; I began to spend more time alone; I used my feet as my

main mode of transportation; I worked with rural Iowans to fight corporate greed and save the family farm.

I realized that there was so much I did not know or understand. So I began to ask questions and I started to draw some important conclusions about life. What does it mean to live simply so that others may simply live? Why else would I want to simplify my life? How can we achieve true justice in today's society? How can I learn to communicate honestly with others in my community?

Although I have very few answers, I did learn that community is a lot harder than it may seem, that there are Catholic priests out there who referred to God as a 'she' (imagine that!). I discovered that simplicity of mind and materials can be liberating and that sharing in the struggles of others can be both wonderful and wretchedly painful. And I'm still learning to let the mystery be.

I often remind myself of all that I learned in JVC and my continuing need to grow and be challenged. I have met many a person my age, in their 20's that is,



who seem cynical, lost and rather unenthusiastic about life. I do not believe that JVC is for everyone, but for me it was a wondrous wake up call and a great way to spend the year. What a short life it is! And how utterly amazing it is when we chill out and truly behold the view.

For more info on JVC or how you can get involved with your local JVC community, call 313-345-3480.

moment you are most in awe of all there is about life that you don't understand you are closer to understanding it all than at any other time.

- Jane Wagner

via pacis
Des Moines Catholic Worker
PO Box 4551
Des Moines IA 50306

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Quiz ...

Take the Des Moines Catholic Worker Quiz

1. How many plastic grocery bags a week does the DMCW use?
a. 50
b. 98
c. 300
2. How many blankets does the DMCW distribute per year?
a. 150
b. 250
c. 500
3. How many pounds of food does the community give out in a week?
a. 300 lb.
b. 500 lb.
c. 2,000 lb. - one ton
4. Who did not graduate from highschool?
a. Richard Flamer
b. Ed Bloomer
c. Beth Preheim
5. How many people come through the house in an average day?
a. 25
b. 50
c. 75
6. How many people come for Thanksgiving dinner?
a. 50
b. 75
c. 125
7. What's the collective total time the workers have been in the community?
a. 25 years.
b. 35 years
c. 50 years
8. Who likes to listen to jazz while mopping the floors?
a. Carla Dawson-Ngamo
b. Michael Sprong
c. Ed Bloomer

> ... Needs ... <

Personal items:

razors, deodorant, shampoo, toothpaste, toothbrushes, diapers

Household items:

papertowels, large trash bags, laundry detergent

Winter items:

new or used: blankets, hats, gloves, socks

> See pgs 1-4 for more! <